

REMARKS

Claims 1-8, 10-15, 24 and 25 have been examined.

I. Preliminary Matters

The Examiner has objected to the claims due to informalities. Accordingly, Applicant has amended the claims in a manner believed to overcome the objections.

II. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-8, 10-15, 24 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Accordingly, Applicant has amended the claims in a manner believed to overcome the rejections.

On page 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner maintains that claim 1 appears incomplete and/or omits steps. Applicant submits, however, that breadth is not to be equated with indefiniteness. Furthermore, the Examiner appears to maintain that certain method recitations are not positively claimed merely because they are not set forth in the classic method format, e.g., forming, layering, etc. While Applicant has amended many of the recitations, Applicant submits that the method is not indefinite merely because every limitation does not start with a term ending in "ing." There is no such rigid requirement set forth in the MPEP.

Finally, the Examiner maintains that there is no product obtained by the claims. Applicant respectfully traverses this assertion. For example, the claims recite that the method is for producing parts for passive electronic components and such parts are formed out of the laminated strip by sandblasting.

In view of the above, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, be withdrawn.

III. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,010,956 to Takiguchi ("Takiguchi")

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-8, 10-15, 24 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Takiguchi.

A. Claim 1

Applicant submits that claim 1 is patentable over the cited reference. For example, claim 1 recites,

- producing a laminated strip having at least one stack formed by alternately stacking a thin and fragile metal strip and a layer of an adhesive material, and
- forming at least one part for the passive electronic components out of the laminated strip by cutting the laminated strip,
- wherein the cutting of the laminated strip comprises at least one step involving etching by sandblasting." (emphasis added)

The Examiner maintains that Takiguchi discloses the claimed features. As set forth above, however, a part is formed by cutting the laminated strip. Accordingly, during the process, the metal strip is cut. If the laminated strips were not cut, no part would be formed. Therefore, the metal strip must be capable of being cut by sandblasting (i.e., thin and fragile). In this regard, Applicant notes that Takiguchi is directed to an engraving process on a face of a printed circuit board; not to a process to produce parts by cutting a laminated strip.

Contrary to the Examiner's assertion, the alleged laminated strip of Takiguchi does not comprise a thin and fragile metal strip. As set forth in column 3, lines 23-25 of Takiguchi, a conductor pattern 2 is formed on a substrate 1, and an overlying interlevel dielectric layer 3 is formed on the conductor pattern 2. Takiguchi discloses that the conductor pattern 2 is typically formed of a conductive material such as Cu, Al, Ag, Au or Ni (col. 3, lines 34-40). In this regard, the reference discloses that the use of Cu and Al are preferred since they have a certain degree of elasticity, are inexpensive and will not easily wear out by sandblasting (col. 3, lines 36-40). Applicant submits that Ag, Au and Ni are also metals having a certain degree of elasticity and are not easily worn out by sandblasting. The metals are merely less inexpensive than Cu or Al. Based on the foregoing, Applicant submits that the alleged metal strip 2 of Takiguchi is clearly not a "thin and fragile" metal strip that is capable of being cut by sandblasting.

Furthermore, the conductor 2 is cut before producing the laminated strip (col. 3, lines 21-25). The only layer removed by sandblasting is the interlevel dielectric layer 3. The interlevel dielectric layer 3 is formed of *resin* and is removed by sandblasting in selected areas (col. 7, lines 45-49).

At least based on the foregoing, Applicant submits that claim 1 is patentable over the cited references.

B. Claims 2-8 and 10-15

Applicant submits that claim 2-8 and 10-15 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

Furthermore, as set forth above, Takiguchi discloses the use of Cu, Al, Ag, Au or Ni for the metal strip (col. 3, lines 34-38). The reference does not teach or suggest any of the specific materials set forth in claim 3.

Claim 5 recites that the cover is a steel strip. Takiguchi fails to disclose this material. Rather, the coating layer 4 of Takiguchi is made of a photosensitive resin.

Regarding claims 6 and 7, Applicant submits that Takiguchi fails to teach or suggest that the coating layer 4 is a layer of paint deposited by serigraphy.

Claim 11 recites that after cutting by sandblasting, separating the cut laminated strip from the support strip. Takiguchi fails to teach or suggest that any portion of the laminate 2/3 is ever separated from the support 1 after sandblasting. Rather, as shown, for example, in Figure 1F, the support 1 remains attached to the upper layers of the wiring board.

C. Claims 24 and 25

Applicant submits that claims 24 and 25 are patentable at least by virtue of their incorporation of the features of claim 1.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

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Respectfully submitted,



Allison M. Tulino
Registration No. 48,294

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

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